

Burrell poised to don Lewis' mantle

TOKYO, Aug 23: A confident American with blazing speed and enviable self-possession is poised to assume Carl Lewis' mantle as the world 100 metres champion, reports Reuter.

Leroy Burrell has been the world's leading 100 metres man for the past two seasons.

This year he set a world indoor record for the 60 metres and broke the world 100 metres mark at the US Championships in June.

Now he is set to meet Lewis in the World Championships 100 metres final on Sunday after defeating his close friend and training partner three times in as many races this year.

Burrell has grown up quickly since a disappointing 1989 European season.

Then he was homesick, tired and unable to cope with the food and strange conditions.

But he could also walk around a hotel lobby recognised only by his fellow athletes and a handful of track-wise fans.

On Thursday Burrell had to force his way into a packed news conference as photographers and television crew fought for position.

"I've lived with pressure for the past two years," Burrell said. "You have to adjust to it."

Adjusting to the pressure has obviously been helped by Burrell's relationship with Lewis and his other colleagues at the Santa Monica Track Club.

"When you are in the Santa Monica Track Club, you leave your ego at the door," Burrell said. "The ego is non-existent."

The hard conditioning work, under the watchful eyes of Santa Monica coaches Tom Tellez and Mike Iakaha is now over and Burrell will be doing only minimal preparation before Saturday's first round of the 100 metres.

Burrell is careful to downplay any talk of rivalry with Lewis or any of his other likely opponents.

But his confidence shone through in impromptu conversations after the regular news conference.

"I'm fairly confident that if I run my best I will win," he



A Tokyo worker puts the finishing touches to a huge logo of the World Athletics Championships in front of the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo in August 22. The Championships began yesterday. —AFP photo

Akihito opens meet

TOKYO, Aug 23: Japan's Emperor Akihito opened the World Track and Field Championships Friday night as hundreds of athletes and kimonos-clad women flag carriers stood in a steady rain in Tokyo's National Stadium, reports AP.

More than 1,700 athletes from 171 nations have entered the nine days of competition.

Weathermen predicted that rain would end for Saturday's opening events, including men's 100-metre sprint preliminary heats and finals in the women's 10-kilometer and men's 20-kilometer walking races.

Chimes and a landing by five parachutists began the opening ceremonies. Marching bands had completed their performance when the rain began just before the lighting of the meet's flame by two runners who carried torches to the top of the 60,000-seat stadium, which was about a third empty.

Then the athletes marched

in, led by rows of women in pink, blue and yellow kimonos.

There was hearty applause for the Soviet team, just arrived from a nation shaken by a coup attempt that shocked the world. Another round of applause greeted the U.S. team, almost right behind the Soviets.

Hanji Aoki, president of the Tokyo organizing committee, clad in formal Japanese attire with a black coat and gray skirt, and Primo Nebiolo, president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, descended to the track's in field to deliver their opening addresses in the rain.

Then the emperor, in the royal box, formally declared the championships open.

After the athletes' exit, some 3,000 Japanese dancers formed patterns with torches and marched or dashed about in processions with tall red and black banners in a presentation called "The Legend of the Earth and the Spirit."

Golden age beckons Ottey, Kersee

TOKYO, Aug 23: A golden age beckons for Jamaican sprinter Merlene Ottey and American all-rounder Jackie Joyner-Kersee, two mature campaigners ready to dominate the women's events at the World Athletics Championships, reports Reuter.

At a time of their lives when most of their competitors have retired, the fleet-footed Ottey and multi-talented Joyner-Kersee are aiming for two gold medals apiece, a lot of headlines and maybe even a world record or two.

Yet each is older than the most senior gold medalist at the previous Championships in Rome in 1987, then 29-year-old Olnica Zagorcheva of Bulgaria who took the 100 metres hurdles title.

Ottey, 31, has ripened into the most elegant sprinter on the international scene as she prepares for the long-awaited reward of her first gold medals in a major championship.

European sprint queen Katrin Krabbe of Germany, new Soviet star Irina Sergeeva and Mary Onyiah of Nigeria look condemned to the fight for silver and bronze, so outrageously does the Jamaican dominate the women's 100 and 200 metres.

In the shorter sprint she is unbeaten in more than 50 finals since 1987 yet for much of her career she looked more like a good loser.

Third in the 1980 Olympic 200 metres final, Ottey went on to win a silver and five more bronze medals in World Championships and Olympics without ever appearing good enough to win gold.

But since moving to Italy to train two years ago she has become a faster and classier sprinter and believes she can even attack American Florence Griffith-Joyner's 200 metres world record of 21.34 seconds.

"I have no regret," she said



JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE recently. "If I had won a gold at the Olympics I would have given up long ago. Now that I'm 31, I'm having a great deal of satisfaction."

Joyner-Kersee, just six months short of her 30th birthday, has taken a vastly different route to the top, having been in a class of her own for years in the heptathlon in which she is unbeaten since 1985.

Only illness or injury can rob her of the gold medal and

the interest will mainly be focused on whether she can beat her own world record of 7.291 points.

A former world record holder in the long jump, she will be aiming to repeat her double gold medal triumph at Rome four years ago, a feat she pulled off again in the 1988 Olympics.

But in the long jump she does at least have a worthy rival in the shape of lanky German Heike Drechsler, who tops this year's rankings with a leap of 7.37 metres.

Joyner-Kersee has kept largely out of view this year, competing only twice in the long jump. But she has been training intensively with husband and coach Bob Kersee and is feeling confident.

"I'm looking forward to the long jump and to doing my very best," she said. "If I can jump 7.35 metres that should win the competition."

They are far from the only veterans panning for gold. Portugal's world, Olympic and European champion Rosa Mota hopes to hold off Poland's Wanda Panfil to win the marathon at the age of 33.

German discus thrower Martina Hellmann, 30, the Olympic gold medalist, is the only woman able to complete a treble after her victories at the first two World Championships but she may find her younger compatriot Ilke Wyludda, unbeaten in three years, too strong this time.

The most interesting battle should come in the 800 metres where brilliant Cuban Ana Fidelia Quirot, with more than 50 wins over the distance in

the past four years, is up against the reigning world and Olympic champion Sigrun Grau, fellow German Christine Wachtel and the fastest woman of this year, Svetlana Masterkova of the Soviet Union.

Heike Henkel of Germany



MERLENE OTTEY should be involved in a fight to the finish in the high jump with world record holder Stefka Kostadinova of Bulgaria, while Lyudmila Nazarhenko and Natalya Grigoryeva could lead a Soviet double in the 100 metres hurdles, possibly in world record time.

Yvonne Murray and Liz McColgan have high hopes of a double in the 3,000 and 10,000 metres, potentially the first golds for Britain in women's track events at the Championships.

Edberg faces Connors in quarters

COMMACK, New York, Aug 23: Top seed Stefan Edberg eased his way into a quarter-final match against Jimmy Connors by defeating fellow-Swede Peter Lundgren 6-3, 6-3 on Thursday at the 250,000-dollar Halmat Challenge Cup, reports Reuter.

Edberg broke Lundgren's service to start second-round match and never lost control.

Defending champion Edberg, who is ranked No. 2 in world tennis, and hasn't lost a set to Lundgren in six meetings, quickly won the first two games and held off Lundgren the rest of the way.

Connors advanced earlier against 20-year-old Nicklas Kulti of Sweden, the World's top-ranked junior player two years ago, 1-6, 6-4, 6-0.

Lundgren, ranked 98th, extended Edberg's service through 16 points to start the second set and had three break points, but Edberg uncorked a Par of aces to end the threat.

Edberg, who won this tournament last year and then lost a first-round match in the US Open the next week to Alexander Volkov of the Soviet Union, said he feels relaxed and confident heading into the Open.

Edberg, who has lost six of 11 matches against Connors, admitted to bad memories about a straight-set defeat to Connors in the fourth round of the 1989 US Open.

Connors, winner of 109 tournament titles including two Wimbledon titles and US Opens, came back from a lacklustre first set to beat Kulti.

Kulti kept Connors on the move in the opening set but Connors began to produce some of his familiar deep placements and angled volleys to rally back for victory.

I was tentative at the start and I got more aggressive after losing the first set, Connors, 38, said. "He didn't like that."

Kulti gave Connors all the credit.

Meskhi mauls Novotna

WASHINGTON, Aug 23: Seventh-seeded Leila Meskhi of the Soviet Union surprised fourth seed Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 on Thursday to reach the semifinals of the Virginia Slims tournament, reports agencies.

Meskhi, who kept the aggressive Novotna pinned to the baseline, said she implemented new tactics to beat the Czechoslovak but wanted to keep the strategy a secret.

Katerina Malceva of Bulgaria also advanced to the semifinals with a straight set victory on Thursday.

Second-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain joined them in the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over No. 5 Zina Garrison. Sanchez Vicario will face Meskhi in Friday afternoon, while Malceva meets third-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez in the evening.

Malceva, the sixth seed, defeated Judith Wiesner of Austria, 6-4, 6-2. Meskhi ousted Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia.

Robertson has shown enough speed and agility in his matches to indicate he has recovered from recent injuries.

On Thursday it was his opponent who was slowed by injury as Austin Adarraga of Spain retired with a sprained ankle after losing the first two games 15-12, 15-7.

British and European junior champion Cassandra Jackman upset defending women's champion Lisa Ople 8-15, 15-5, 15-12, 15-17, 16.

After losing the first game, Jackman changed the pace and power of her shots to take the next two comprehensively.

Ople, who had won the tournament for the last three years, fought back to snatch the fourth before Jackman clinched the match after a close tussle in the final game.

Jet dash for the Soviets

TOKYO, Aug 23: The main Soviet contingent to take part in the World Athletics Championships here flew in yesterday on a chartered flight from the Soviet far east port of Vladivostok, reports AFP.

The 99 athletes and 29 officials arrived in Nagoya, central Japan, before noon and took a six-hour bus ride to Tokyo. Rikio Imajo, a spokesman for the organisers said.

They were training in Vladivostok when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was detained Monday by hardliners while on vacation.

On Wednesday, four Soviet athletes, three of them world record holders, arrived here on a regular Aeroflot flight from Moscow.

One of them, pole vault record holder Sergei Bubka, said they had no problems in leaving the country and that he had always supported Gorbachev's reform policy.

Altogether 106 athletes and 80 officials make up the Soviet delegation, the second largest after the United States.

Bubka faced some 40 cameramen and reporters when he tried to pick up his team jersey and shoes from a sponsor, an European sporting good maker, at a plush Tokyo hotel which serves as the athletes' village.

He turned away and said he would return later, a spokesman for the sponsor said.

Asked what he felt was immoral, he said: "Gurevich is still working with Kasparov."

Anand denied any interference from Kasparov, and said a Belgian chess editor, Willy Icklicki, had suggested that Gurevich second him, "I

India to fight for kabaddi in Asian Games

CALCUTTA, Aug 23: The Kabaddi Federation of India (KFI) has urged the Indian Olympic Association to make a "proper" representation to include kabaddi in the Hiroshima Asian Games in 1994, reports PTI.

Mr Achinta Kumar Saha, the secretary of the KFI, today told PTI that in view of kabaddi bringing the only gold medal for India at the last year's Beijing Asian Games, the Indian authorities should make an all out effort to include kabaddi in the next Games.

The Hiroshima Asian Games Organising Committee had earlier announced a list of 25 disciplines excluding kabaddi but the area likely to include one or two games in the list.

The final decision will be taken at the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) meeting to be held in Delhi in the third week of September.

Mr Saha further said that there are at least four disciplines which are trying to "get into" the Hiroshima Games, apart from kabaddi the other disciplines are basketball, Taikwondo and Wushu.

"Kabaddi's case is stronger because there are at least eight to ten countries including China, Japan, South Korea and Malaysia who are interested in kabaddi", he said adding that apart from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have already requested the Hiroshima organising committee to include it.

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Karpov beats Anand, then attacks Kasparov



BRUSSELS, Aug 23: Anatoly Karpov won his match in the World Championship quarter-finals in Brussels on Thursday — and then launched a bitter verbal attack on his old rival, current world champion Garry Kasparov, reports Reuter.

After some sparkling chess in the eighth and last scheduled round of the quarter-finals, post-match news conferences stole the limelight.

Karpov, the Soviet former world champion, beat India's Viswanathan Anand to qualify for the semi-finals.

Then, at an acrimonious news conference, he accused Kasparov of "immorality" in having given his opponent his second, the Soviet Grandmaster Mikhail Gurevich.

"I wasn't in good form in this match — the task was much more difficult since Kasparov gave Anand his second — absolutely immoral," he said. "Never before has there been such interference in the World Championship: Such immorality."

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ANATOLY KARPOV thought it was a good idea, he is a very strong player," he said.

Gurevich said: "Karpov has said many unpleasant words about me and Kasparov. Kasparov had nothing to do with me working with Anand. It is true he (Anand) played much better, but didn't have the luck or nerves."

In the Championships, the two continuing games were both reaching critical positions.

In the match between Soviet players Artur Yusupov and Vassily Ivanchuk, which Yusupov needed to win to tie the match, he played an incredible rook sacrifice on his 20th move.

"Yusupov is attacking like a wild pig," said Yugoslav

Grandmaster Lubomir Ljubojevic. The attack that followed was sound, and on move 38, Ivanchuk resigned.

They will play two deciding games at a faster time limit on Saturday to decide who proceeds to the semi-finals. If that is not sufficient they will play a further two games on Sunday, followed by a drawing of lots if necessary.

In the last remaining game, the Soviet Boris Gelfand was playing white against Nigel Short of England, and was winning as they approached the time control.

Under immense pressure from Short, Gelfand played insufficiently, and Short won, to his surprise. Afterwards he admitted that until that point, "I was smashed".

Short has now qualified for the semi-finals, along with Jan Timman of the Netherlands who beat Viktor Korchnoi of Switzerland, Karpov, and the winner of the Yusupov-Ivanchuk tie-break.

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Bubka may soar higher



TOKYO, Aug 23: Soviet pole vault star Sergei Bubka and Americans Carl Lewis and Greg Foster, all gold medalists at World Track and Field Championships in Helsinki and Rome, could extend their streak when the third championship starts Saturday, reports AP.

Lewis competes in two events — the men's 100 metres and the long jump. In the medal race, that gives him an edge over Bubka and Foster, a hurdler.

Bubka, however, has not lost a major pole vault title since he stunned the world by taking the gold at the inaugural championships in Helsinki in 1983 with 5.70 metres. He was 19 at the time. He won his second world gold in Rome four years later with a 5.85.

He is also the Olympic gold medalist and the current world record-holder — both outdoors and indoors.

The Soviet vaulter set the new 6.10-metre mark outdoor record this month. He is the only man who has done better than six metres this season.

Lewis's record in the 100 is



SERGEI BUBKA and remains the strong favourite for the gold.

Lewis holds a string of 65 consecutive wins in the long jump.

He took the gold in Helsinki with 8.55 metres and in Rome with 8.67. He is also a double Olympic champion, in Los Angeles and in Seoul. But he will have to perform at his best to beat fellow American Mike Powell, who has been jumping extremely well this season.

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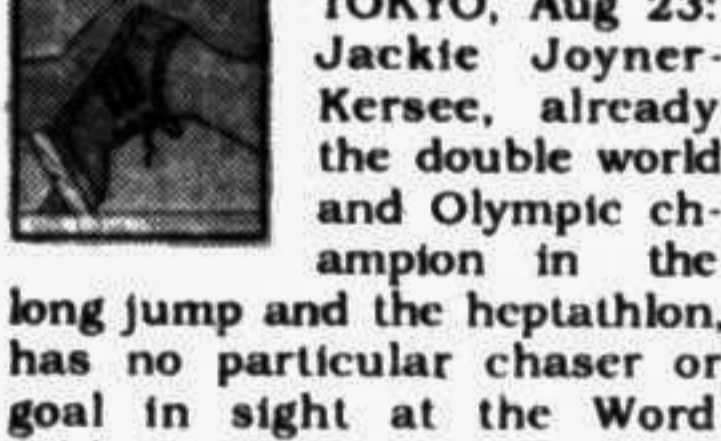
less impressive. He won the gold in 1983 in 10.07 seconds. In Rome, he lost to Canadian Ben Johnson, who was later disqualified when he tested positive at the Seoul Olympics for steroid use and had to return both world championship and Olympic gold medals.

To make matters more daunting for Lewis, he has been defeated this year by teammate Leroy Burrell, who set the world record at 9.90 seconds. Burrell is a strong favourite in the men's sprint for the gold.

Foster won the 110-metre hurdles in 1983 with 13.42 seconds and repeated four years later with 13.21. The American veteran appears to peak in world championship years, and bottoms out with a string of injuries in Olympic years.

Martina Hellmann of Germany also is looking to extend a gold-medal record that stretches back through Helsinki and Rome in the women's discus. But the German has not been performing at her best and she is not considered a strong contender for the gold in Tokyo.

Joyner-Kersee prefers long jump



TOKYO, Aug 23: Jackie Joyner-Kersee, already the double world and Olympic champion in the long jump and the heptathlon, has no particular chaser or goal in sight at the World Athletics Championships here, reports AFP.

And at age 29, the US superwoman won't wince at the quirks of the championship schedule that will put her in the long jump final first, unlike in usual competitions, on Sunday and then in the seven-sport contest in the following two days.

"I feel like I'm in great shape. I for myself concentrate on the long jump now, and then I'll think about the heptathlon," said the muscular "queen of athletics" who holds the world heptathlon record of 7,291 points.

"I am not looking at a particular one person, I'll get out there and try to do the things I want to do."

She has healed her strained left leg after the US trials in

June while limiting her Grand Prix appearance to a long jump in Finland. "Lately, I've been putting my heptathlon together and also my approach to the long jump," she said.

"How far I'm gonna jump? I don't know. You can jump 7.35 meters or better, you sure win the competition," said the younger sister of 1984 Olympics triple jump champion Al Joyner, whose wife Florence-Griffith has retired with three sprint golds from Indonesia retains ban on S Africa

Indonesia retains ban on S Africa

JAKARTA, Aug 23: Indonesia said on Thursday the ban on its sportsmen and women competing against South Africans remained in force despite the republic's readmission to the Olympic movement, reports Reuter.

Sports Minister Akbar Tanjung asked Indonesian sportsmen and women on Wednesday to report to his office before competing abroad to avoid problems about facing South Africans.

There had been mistakes being made all day on line calls and he chose to overrule the only one on break point.

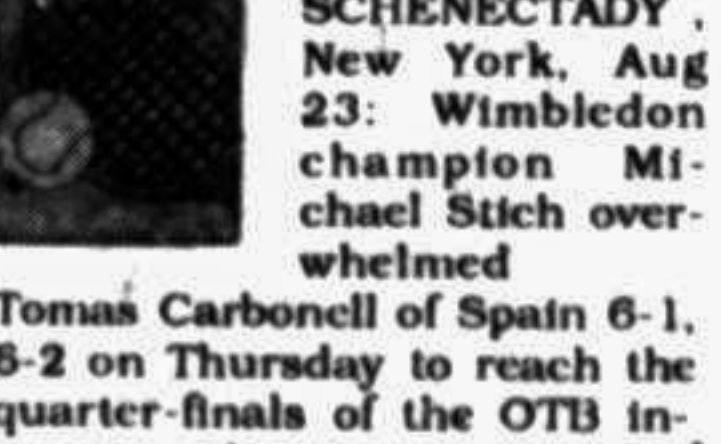
All eight seeds in the men's draw advanced to the quarters for the first time this year, according to an ATP spokesman.

The rest of the quarter-finalists are Spaniards Sergi Bruguera, Emilio Sanchez and Francisco Claret, Soviets Andrei Cherkasov and Alexander Molkov and Hort Skor of Austria.

In women's play, number two seed Julie Halard of France was upset by Nicole Provis if Australia 5-7, 6-2, 6-2.

Top seed Anke Huber of Germany advanced in straight sets over American teenager Lindsay Davenport 6-1, 7-5.

Stich posts easy win



SCHENECTADY, New York, Aug 23: Wimbledon champion Michael Stich overwhelmed Tomas Carbonell of Spain 6-1, 6-2 on Thursday to reach the quarter-finals of the OTB international tennis tournament, reports Reuter.

The hard-serving German recorded eight aces and 10 service winners as he needed just 48 minutes to beat Carbonell.

"I feel I played much better today than yesterday," said Stich, who survived a tense, first-set tiebreaker on Wednesday before defeating Australian Mark Woodbridge.

"Obviously, I'm trying to peak for the US Open. This is just one step."

Carbonell said Stich is still

on a high coming off his Wimbledon triumph.

He is a cut above the rest of us right now, Carbonell said. "He has so much more confidence."

Stich will face seventh-seeded Australian Todd Woodbridge in today's quarter-finals.

Woodbridge outlasted 1990 French Open champion Andre Gomez of Ecuador 6-7, 6-4, 7-5 in the best match of the day.

Gomez appeared to have broken Woodbridge in the 11th game of the third set for 6-5 but had a ball overruled by chair umpire Dana Locontu that appeared to have hit the line.

"I don't want to take anything away from Woodbridge, but I thought I was robbed," said Gomez, who threw his racket in disgust after the call.

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